

By MICHELLE PAINE

A WOMAN told yesterday how her brother, who died of leukemia, used to grow vegetables in soil not far from the controversial Howrah tip.

Elly Bolt's brother, Jim, died two years ago from leukemia at the age of 61, but it was the cancer that struck him when he was just 34 that makes his sister wonder.

Jim Bolt and his family lived for eight or nine years in Lucas St, until 1980.

Elly was keen to see testing done at the old landfill site.

Environment Minister Judy Jackson announced on Friday that soil and groundwater testing would be done at Wentworth Park, which was once the tip site.

"I think I'd like to know why, that's what he wanted to know, why me, what have I done to deserve this?" said Elly, of Lauderdale.

"They used to grow their own fruit and vegetables there and the [ground] water used to come up there sometimes."

Elly said the family was told it was extremely rare to survive the initial cancer that struck her brother, a teratoma.

"They were told a drug once used to treat cancer had led to the leukemia, and that link was now known."

"It's too late for these people, but maybe it takes something like this to stop something happening in future," she said.

"Because my brother moved it is highly unlikely he would be in any statistics relevant to the area. Many more are likewise not included."

News that tests would be done was "fantastic".

I think I'd like to know why, that's what he [my brother] wanted to know, why me, what have I done to deserve this?

"That's what I was asking for basically. It needs to be done so people have answers and so perhaps it won't happen again."

She said the issue also made her conscious of the old Lauderdale tip site, not far from where she lives.

"It makes me very angry that this has to be a political thing. I don't believe the issue was just in the life of this Government."

The decision by the Government to order tests came after Eastern Shore residents complained of what they thought was a higher than normal incidence of cancer among people who lived near Wentworth Park.

Public Health director Roscoe Taylor released details of cancer rates and said there was no pattern in the cancer types reported so far to suggest any link to a local environmental cause.

The park was used as a tip between 1963 and 1967. It was then waste ground before becoming sports grounds.

Former Howrah milkman Basil Shearing said he had legally dumped more than 36,000 litres of oil at the tip over four years, and council trucks had dumped much more than him.



UNKNOWN QUANTITY: Elly Bolt wonders what possible effects the old Howrah tip could have had on her brother's health. Picture: JAMES KERR

Heading:

Old Tip Question
over brother's
cancer fate.